

### **REMARKS**

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough consideration provided the present application. Claims 1-13 are now present in the application. Claims 14 and 15 have been cancelled. Claims 1 and 13 are independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

### **Allowable Subject Matter**

The Examiner has indicated that dependent claims 1-13 are allowed. Applicants greatly appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter by the Examiner.

### **Information Disclosure Citation**

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references supplied with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on November 7, 2005, and for providing Applicants with an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 form filed therewith.

Applicants have also submitted the references supplied with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on June 30, 2006 for consideration by the Examiner after the instant Office Action was issued. The Examiner is courteously requested to provide Applicants with an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 form filed therewith with the next official communication.

### **Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102**

Claims 14 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kamata, U.S. Patent No. 3,988,900. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

Without conceding to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to timely advance the prosecution of the application, as the Examiner will note, independent claims 14 and 15 have been cancelled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection has been obviated and/or rendered moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are respectfully requested.

### **CONCLUSION**

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

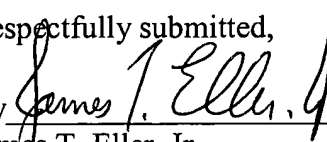
It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: September 6, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By  \_\_\_\_\_

James T. Eller, Jr.

Registration No.: 39,538

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant